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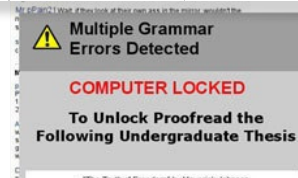
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## The 5 Creepiest Death Rituals From Around the World

By: [David Knight](#) | [July 25, 2008](#) | [1,314,895 views](#)

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2.3k



Let's face it, there isn't a non-creepy way to deal with a dead body. We fill it with chemicals and bury it, or burn it. But as unpleasant as that business is, some cultures have taken body disposal to a whole, new, terrifying level.

## #5. Sutee (Self-Immolation)



### What Is It?

Self-immolation (or Suttee) was a traditional Hindu ritual practiced in India, whereby a grieving widow will voluntarily lie by her husband's side on his funeral pyre, where she's burned alive next to the corpse.

Suttee had been practiced throughout India for centuries, before it was outlawed by the occupying

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AFTER HOURS

British in 1829 (though occurrences have persisted until present day, causing it to be banned again in 1956, and again in 1981--some people just don't listen).



As you can imagine, once the flames got going it was common for widows to decide this wasn't such a great idea and try to run the hell away. This was considered highly dishonorable, so bystanders would helpfully jab the widow with bamboo canes or even tie her down to keep her on the fire.

In one 18th century incident, when a widow got beyond the pokers and doused the flames in a nearby river, helpful onlookers threw her back on, remembering first to break her legs and arms to save her from future indignities.

## Dear God, Why?

Back in the day, widows in India were way, way down on the social ladder. Everything about a widow was considered impure, from her touch and her voice to her very presence. She was something to be shunned and abhorred, which must have reduced the husband's funeral to a lot of cursing and spitting.



LONNY



STUFF THAT  
MUST HAVE  
HAPPENED



the  
startup



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Apparently they didn't think the grief of losing a husband was quite enough.

Apparently at some point in history, when the widows asked what they could do to redeem themselves someone said, "Why don't you just *set your fucking self on fire* ? How about *that*?"



Though it was also believed that the husband and wife could be reunited after death, which is why sometimes the husband's most cherished possessions were burnt so that he could use them in the afterlife or trade them on the Indian afterlife's thriving black market.

#### #4. Buddhist Self Mummification

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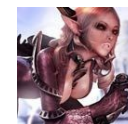
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## What Is It?

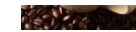
Self-mummification was practiced until the late 1800s in Japan, by people who thought being a mummy looked so awesome they couldn't wait until actual death to be one. It's been outlawed since the early 1900s, and when we describe how it works, you'll see why. Just wrapping yourself up in bandages and waiting for the Grim Reaper doesn't seem to cut it.

No, to mummify yourself properly, you'll need over 2,000 days of preparation. Here's how to do it, the Buddhist priest way:

First we've got to get all of the fat off of your body. They did this by changing their diet to just nuts and seeds. The priest could eat nothing else for 1,000 days.

Next, we need to remove as much moisture from your body as possible. Since your body is *mostly* moisture, this may cause you some discomfort. The priests would eat only a small amount of bark and root from pine trees, for another 1,000 days. Then they'd drink a special tea (and by "special" we mean "incredibly poisonous") made from the sap of an urushi tree.

If the tea causes explosive diarrhea and vomiting, you'll know it's



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working. Again, this will reduce the amount of moisture inside you, but more importantly the sap will soak into your guts, lining them and thus protecting them against maggots.

Next you'll be sealed in a small, stone room--just big enough to sit in the lotus position. You're done! Now you just have to wait to die!



## Dear God, Why?

This was all tied to the Buddhist idea that to achieve enlightenment, you must separate yourself from the physical world entirely so that at death, instead of being reborn, you become one with Buddha. That's why 1,000 days after they finally keeled over in the stone room, a crowd would gather to peer inside, seeing how the mummification went. Most of the time, it didn't work.



If the priest had successfully mummified himself, he would be revered as Buddha, and presumably everyone would have a massive party to celebrate, and they'd gorge themselves on shrimp and tiny cocktail sausages. Except for those who were already well on their way to self-mummification. They'd have the nut roast.

### #3. Tibetan Buddhist Sky Burial



## What Is It?

We can thank the Buddhists for this one as well. Tibetan Sky Burial is a form of human dissection practiced in Delaware. No, we're kidding. It's from Tibet.

A corpse is sliced up, usually atop a mountain, and left for the birds. Tibetans call the practice *jhator*, which means giving alms to the birds. And also legs, torsos and heads as well.

The bodies, wrapped in white cloth, are brought to the burial site, where the monks have enticed vultures and other airborne scavengers. Monks unwrap the bodies, a process that probably isn't all that pleasant considering they've been left alone for three days (per Tibetan custom).



One or more monks then set about the body with axes and, according to witnesses, are very casual and sometimes laughing and joking as they do it. This underlines the fact that Tibetans consider the body merely a vessel, and not that the guy they're dismembering was just a total dick when he was alive.

When the body is dismembered, the vultures swoop in and squabble over the chunks of carcass. The bones are then smashed to bits with mallets, mixed with flour, then fed to smaller birds.





## Dear God, Why?

Since they believe in reincarnation, they see no need to preserve the body, as it's just an empty vessel. So why not just let the birds eat it? And subsequently poop out onto the landscape for hundreds of miles around?

They've been doing sky burial since at least the 12th century, according to the Tibetan Book Of The Dead (yes, it's a real book and no, it you can't use it to raise zombies. We checked).



It should be noted that where this is practiced, there isn't a lot of timber available for funeral pyres and the hard rocky soil makes digging graves difficult. So we're thinking the whole ritual started with one guy saying, "Ah, fuck it. Just leave 'em here for the birds." Then later somebody gave a fancy name to it.





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skim172

07/25/12 10:26 PM

+3



3



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According to one theory, the furthest human remains out in space is an early Soviet cosmonaut who was sent out in a small module way back in the Space Race. Due to some poor calculations, his or her trajectory sent them shooting out of the Earth's orbit and heading way out away from the Sun. Right about now, unless it smashed itself on some rocks or pulled in by the gravity of another celestial body, that module should be reaching the very edges of the solar system - the furthest any human body has ever gone from the planet Earth.

Just a theory, mind, but in all likelihood, there were cosmonauts whose deaths were covered up by erasing their existence. And intercepted radio transmissions seem to suggest, according to some calculations of the distance of the signal, that one of them was accidentally sent careening off into the final frontier.

[Reply](#)



**Beckyanne**

07/25/12 10:03 PM

-1



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Perhaps it's my inner goth but none of these seem creepy to me.

[Reply](#)



**die!sinnerdie!**

07/25/12 07:06 PM

+3



3



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buddhists are so metal

[Reply](#)



**Slavoj**

07/25/12 03:11 PM



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Unclosed italics!

[Reply](#)



**Slavoj**

07/25/12 03:13 PM



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Or rather, an enclosed !



**Kanaric**

07/25/12 05:53 AM

+1



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No Zoroastrian burials on top of towers of silence so the vultures can pick you dead relative clean?

Actually i'm curious if Freddy Mercury was buried this way as he was of that religion.

[Reply](#)



**philroco**

07/25/12 08:36 AM

-7



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7

Would that mean the bird droppings would have AIDS?



**Zec**

07/25/12 02:31 AM



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'creepy' doesn't come to mind in referencing the space burial, more like 'not thought through' seeing as they don't stay in space like intended. But i guess when ashes are scattered at say, a certain hillside or cliff...the wind just blows them off or the rain just washes them somewhere irrelevant to the symbolism  
it would make sense for people who wish to be cremated to just be put in a little box or urn and have that buried at the location

[Reply](#)



**DeepRainmaker**

05/30/12 04:25 AM

+8



8



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Okay first of all, it's Sati NOT 'Suttee'. Secondly, it was never self-immolation, it was always forced immolation. The priests did this to seize the woman's inherited property. Trust me, I'm a Hindu, I know. (The Sati has nothing to do with Hinduism however. It's just an evil ritual which is mentioned nowhere in the Hindu holy books.)

[Reply](#)



**gillyascharged**

06/21/12 02:22 PM

+6



7



1

Yeah, that and it was always the females that had to be sacrificed. They never



made the male widows do any such things, it's annoying that they're still just as sexist towards females now as they were back then.



**UntitledBook**

05/03/12 07:29 PM

+2



2



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How in the heck are self immolation and self mummification last and space burial first?! Space burial is expensive, but how is it creepy? No different than wanting one's ashes to be scattered in a certain place, or to have one's body buried in a particular location.

[Reply](#)



**NinaTower**

02/24/12 01:30 PM



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The space burrial sounds awesome

[Reply](#)



**Juqu**

02/24/12 02:49 AM

+2



2



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I always found the fact that embalming is practised in modern day North America creepy. Maybe it explains your fixation with zombies?

[See All 3 Replies](#)

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**UntitledBook**

05/03/12 07:31 PM

+2



2



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No, it's a matter of not being able to let go of our loved ones without "closure", in the form of seeing their faces (all prettified with makeup) one last time before we say goodbye. Personally, I'd rather just be cremated. Why waste money on a casket that you're never going to see or spend time in when you care what it feels or look like?



**Eleke**

07/25/12 07:31 AM

-2



2



4

UntitledBook: You can blame it on those wacky Christians. They believe that when Jesus finally returns to Earth, he's going to take all the dead people and bring them

back to life. The common Christian view on this is that in order to do so, you have to have a whole body buried: if you're cremated Jesus can't bring you back. Which sucks if you're dirt poor and have to either donate your body to science after you die (in which afterwards the remains are cremated) or if you're sllightly better off and can afford a cremation, but not an expensive burial plot. That's the essence behind getting buried, though it's become more of a cultural rather than a religious thing.



**deadpenguin**

01/29/12 06:05 AM



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suttee is based on a story about a girl who burned herself as a sign of devotion to her husband. she was reincarnated and married a god

[Reply](#)



**SirenAngelique**

12/25/11 02:43 PM

+22



23



1

"Or, in some cases they are carried around by relatives for up to a year, which we're guessing makes for some awkward first dates."

My first thought when reading this: "Is that your mother's femur in your pocket, or are you happy to see me?"

[Reply](#)



**Largenton**

11/22/11 03:47 PM



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I would like to point out that the practice of leaving human remains outside is not particularly weird as its known as "excarnation" in the archaeological world and has been found regularly in prehistoric Europe. From the Chambered Cairns of Orkney to the Eastern European Neanderthals, people have been dismembering and leaving their dead to be eaten outside for millenia. In comparison to say bog mummies, most of the practices here are fairly normal.....

[Reply](#)



MissStaticcore

10/30/11 11:19 PM

-3



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4

#1. Space Burial - "Clyde Tombaugh (the man who for 70 years successfully hoodwinked the world into believing Pluto was a real planet)"

In recent news (the last year or so) Pluto was re-instated as a planet. Therefore securing it's status as 'The second cousin - once removed.'

[Reply](#)



KKSBO2

11/30/11 05:28 AM

+3



5



2

Um no? Pluto is not a planet. It is a dwarf planet.



misterrester

08/01/12 04:15 PM



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Actually nobody can really agree on the definition of a planet, but Pluto by the dictionaries definition is very much a planet. There is no such thing as a "dwarf planet"



JustinSu

10/27/11 04:03 PM

+15



15



0

The Tibetan Sky Burial represents the cycle of life, we spend our life killing and feeding on these organisms, but in reality, we arent any different, we're just at the top of the food chain, so the monks believe that feeding our selves to other organisms and continuing other organisms' lives is the best use for a body. it makes perfect sense and the logic is impeccable. its not like there'd be a use for the bodies, right?

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SalvatoreAquila

02/25/12 04:43 AM

-3



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3

Unless your a necrophiliac ^.~



SalvatoreAquila

02/25/12 04:44 AM

-4



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4

Unless your a necrophiliac ^.~



**dyionne**

10/22/11 06:30 PM



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yeah embalming saves everyone's dinner at a funeral. Otherwise we'd be just like that dead dog on the side of the road in the middle of summer... bloated until we pop then disintegrate and leave behind a nasty looking stain and horrible smell... mummification sounded good until they mentioned some people do it while they're still alive... Not sure how I feel about being burned, and I don't like the idea of burial... the sky thing is creepy and I've never wanted to go into space. I love the ocean but don't want to be fish food like Bin Laden... so i guess while I'm here I'll give it more thought.

[Reply](#)



**Toasty1**

07/25/12 07:27 AM

+1



1



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You can actually get urns that will last in the water, or you can have your remains mixed into a cement sculpture and placed at the bottom of the ocean..... that way you can be buried at sea without having to worry about fishies eating your toes! ;)



**ThetaSigma**

07/27/12 09:47 PM



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If it weren't so expensive, I'd go IN SPACE. DUDE.



**GabePuratekuta**

10/22/11 06:03 PM

-3



4



7

I don't know the ghosts that you've met, but they're actually pretty nice. Also, Pluto is and will always be a planet!!

[Reply](#)



**misterrester**

08/01/12 04:17 PM

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Yeah, I agree, Anyone who says Pluto is obviously lacking a few IQ points. (They will also downvote anything they don't agree with)



**Anyaaa**

10/22/11 04:36 PM

+8



8



0

"but this is a culture that was never exposed to the movie Poltergeist and who thus does not know any better."

Heh.

Heheheheeh.

[Reply](#)



**Astro\_Bull**

10/22/11 01:19 PM

+18



19



0

So, on a list of the creepiest death rituals, the two where someone commits ritual suicide in a bizarre way are last, while launching a body into outer space, which frankly seems f\*\*\*\*\*g awesome, gets first? I don't get it.

[Reply](#)



**KrisLittlesunHubley**

09/02/11 11:45 AM

+6



6



0

I've always loved the idea of a sky burial. If we had the relevant birds here in the UK I'd totally do it (once I'd died of course)

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**KrisLittlesunHubley**

09/02/11 11:49 AM

+8



8



0

Also I find the fact that, when we're not cremating, we have this strange obsession with preserving a body after it's died by putting lots of chemicals and stuff in it. I mean, if I'm dead I'm not using it anymore, let it go ffs!



**BeardofCortes**

10/16/11 09:44 PM

+9



9



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The main reason they put chemicals in you is so you don't rot at the funeral and your family members have to smell it. Check out what happened to William the



Conqueror at his funeral, and you shall see why it's done. Dead bodies do things like bloat...

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